for future use) and then apportioning this total cost among the blocks on the basis of UHV (Useful heat value) UHV of reserves. This was approved by the Coal India Board.

For all blocks which may be further identified, CIL Board has directed that exploration charges should be determined on the basis of meterage drilled in the particular block and weighted average drilling cost as furnished by CMPDIL.

Annual updation of exploration cost is to be done every year in September on the basis of weighted average drilling cost as furnished by CMPDIL for the previous year.

(c) and (d) Exploration charges are to be paid to Coal India for any blocks for which expenditure has been incurred by CMPDIL, CIL and/or its subsidiaries including CMPDIL.

Quality of Automobile Components

956. DR. JAGANNATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Chinese automotive component sectors are producing better products in comparison with the Indian automobile sector;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps Government have taken/ propose to take to improve the quality of automobile components so as to compete with the foreign countries?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) According to Indian Automotive Component Manufacturers Association, the Indian auto component industry is stronger than their Chinese counterpart and is producing better quality components, though a segment of the Chinese component industry is being developed by China to become world class. Out of the 350 key players of the Indian Auto Component Industry, 93 have already received the ISO-9000 certification which amply demonstrates that the Indian auto component industry is highly conscious of quality. Government is permitting liberal import of technology by auto component manufacturers to further improve quality of their products.

Pakistan's demand for supply of wheat

957. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJI-RAO SHINDE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan Government have made a fervent demand for supply of some two lakh tonnes to wheat from India;

(b) if so, whether Pakistan is not in a position to pay for the wheat in cash; and

(c) the Government's response to this demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH): (a) High Commission for Pakistan in India had indicated Pakistan's interest in importing wheat and sugar from India and made certain enquiries regarding specifications and other details. However, no formal request from Pakistan Government has been received in this regard.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Proposal to amend the Patents Act

958. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minsiter of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal under their consideration to amend the Patents Act;

(b) if so, the details of the proposal; and

(c) the time by when a decision in this regard would be taken?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) As a signatory to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Agreement, India has certain obligations. The WTO Agreement, inter-alia, contains an agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. (TRIPs) in respect of provisions concerning Intellectual Property Rights. Apart from the obligations which arose from January 1, 1995, India has time till January 1, 2000 to implement its obligations under the TRIPs Agreement and till January 1, 2005 to introduce product patents in the areas of technology not protected so far.

The Government is now in the process of holding consultations on the subject.